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ABSTRACT

This document asserts that counselors in comprehensive development programs for postsecondary students must provide personal, academic, and career development guidance. Developmental students often possess problems such as cultural conflict, skills deficiency, lack of motivation, and unrealistic expectations. Due to negative educational experiences in the past, many of them won't seek help. Successful programs must integrate counseling with teaching, and must have a highly structured, easily accessible, and preventative format. Counselors must work with faculty and staff to provide mentoring programs, informal student "support" groups, and credit courses in social, academic, and career planning. They should also act as intermediaries between teachers and students and help provide a nurturing environment where students can value themselves and feel confident in their academic abilities. Contains 25 references. (YKH)

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The Role of Counseling in a Comprehensive Developmental Program for Post-Secondary Students

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Summary:
Counseling should be an integral part of a successful developmental education program since developmental students typically harbor negative emotional associations toward their earlier unsuccessful school experiences. In addition, they need help in making realistic educational and career decisions and plans, and may need to overcome interpersonal difficulties that contributed toward their present scholastic deficiencies. In short, their scholastic shortcomings are deeply influenced and intertwined with negative attitudes and emotions. Such students must be helped to recognize and find ways to overcome these affective blocks to learning if they are to succeed academically.

This paper describes a model for incorporating counseling principles and strategies into a developmental education program using a variety of delivery methods including overall staff training in providing support and challenge to students as well as in identifying students who may need more intensive counseling and in providing appropriate service for them. Programs that have successfully combined counseling with team-taught developmental programs and those who have used other strategies will be described and discussed in light of the findings of current research on self-efficacy, locus of control, self-concept, learning styles and so on. The chapter will also show how theories and schemata of theorists like Perry, Vyygotsky, Kuhn, Bandura, and others underlie and are embodied in successful practices that help students overcome their prior dysfunctional academic experiences.

Counseling has been a service offered by programs for low achieving students ever since professional college counselors began to take over student counseling from faculty in the 1930s. That counseling benefits students is amply documented by Rayman & Garis (1989) who conclude "...freshmen who use counseling services are more likely to succeed in college than those who do not." (p 129).

Counseling freshmen developmental students is very important because many enter college with a crippling load of emotional baggage. They bring with them problems from many different sources for they are not just

underprepared in skills and coursework, but they are academically at-risk for many other reasons as well. They may be working full-time with family responsibilities, or have minimal support from key family members, or may expect to fail college courses no matter what they do or have other personal difficulties that limit their success. Some are recovering from alcoholism or drug use or mental illness. As Roueche & Roueche (1993) explain "Today's (open-admission) students are at risk in a number of ways that complicate and make obsolete the old definition of college students" (p. 1). Today's developmental students differ from those we considered underprepared in the 50s and 60s in that their difficulties are greater. Often, they don't know that they don't know and they don't understand what college professors expect. They need comprehensive services including effective counseling, advising, and mentoring as well as academic skills development as well as courses that will increase their background knowledge if they are to survive in college.

Students who were previously unsuccessful in school tend to reject the teaching methods, materials and strategies that were used to teach them in elementary and high school; they need to be treated like the adults they are and taught with different approaches and materials. Most need counseling to help undo the lingering effects of the negative attitudes, emotions, and fears they experienced in their earlier schooling. Returning adults often need counseling to help them readjust to playing the role of student again.

In this chapter we will discuss how counseling can help in developmental programs and the different roles counselors play as team members in a successful program for underprepared students, as well as the strategies that can be used to help at-risk students survive and succeed in college. In addition, typical kinds of student problems and the psychodynamics of failure will be described and examples of successful programs presented.

Counselors must be an integral part of the developmental program team - they can not remain 'stand-alone professionals who work with students behind closed office doors.

The role of the counselor in a developmental education program is different from that of the traditional college counselor who meets and talks with students in an office in a counseling center. To be sure, counselors in a developmental education program may still counsel individuals and groups but their main duty is to provide outreach activities with students and staff and reduce the perceived formality and distance of counseling by making it more accessible to students. In other words, their job is not restricted to crisis intervention, but rather they function to prevent crises from occurring. To this end they also have the responsibility of convincing

both students and staff of the uses and benefits of counseling and how to create a supportive environment for students. .

Counselors must be included in program planning , attend regular staff meetings with instructional staff and participate in the program evaluation. The counselor's position must be integrated with those of program faculty, and staff including tutors. The counselor should participate in training receptionists and paraprofessionals such as tutors who interact with students. They should select train and supervise mentors and provide assistance to the instructional staff in understanding and coping with students' learning difficulties.

In other words, counseling services that enhance student success must proactively meet the needs of students in three areas : personal, academic and career development. (Rayman & Garis, 1989, p 129). This means that the counselors must have as their primary goal planned programmatic counseling rather than waiting until problems occur to help students.

By a proactive counseling model emphasizing outreach programs. we mean that intervention programs can be initiated before problems become crises. In other words, counselors should not wait until students are desperate. As Rayman & Garis (1989) state, " We know what the presenting problems (for freshmen) were in the past and what they are now, and what they are likely to be in the future." It is also important that counselors stress short-term, approaches and address a wide array of outreach programs. They should offer groups on timely topics, teach courses with credit that address personal, educational, and career development concerns and serve staff, instructors and faculty. Although there may be times when counselors are called upon to provide crisis intervention service as well as individual help, their main function should be preventative.

In order to offer appropriate groups and services , it is assumed that counselors keep up with changing student problems through regular surveys, interview studies, etc. For example, they might offer groups on test taking skills and include information on how to overcome common difficulties in taking computer administered exams timed appropriately during the semester.

Counselors must be confident enough in their beliefs about counseling to deliver what they know students need in the way of assistance and deliver it BEFORE students ask. Also counselors must be more directive in working with underprepared students than with students who have

previously been successful in their pre-college schooling. (Rayman & Garis , 1989, p. 139).

Among the individual and group services that counselors should offer are academic planning and concerns, career planning, and social/personal issues. In addition to teaching credit courses, they can offer mini courses on time management, improving interpersonal relationships, study skills personal issues like exam panic or homesickness, (For example, counselors at a southern university located in the mountains that recruited many students from a large coastal city offered a popular group for freshmen called "I hate this place"). Also they can offer computer assisted assessment and guidance to support freshmen development and provide handouts and other aids on these areas.

Outreach services should include on-line Internet information services. For example, Paul Treuer has developed a course called Introduction to College Learning at the University of Minnesota Duluth with an on-line textbook, *The Student Handbook* (http://www.d.umn.edu/student). Among other applications, students use the web-based assessment tools in the Student Handbook for self-diagnosis and, if necessary, referral to campus resources. *The Student Handbook* (an on-line program) has a wide range of modules grouped into three competency areas: academic, personal/social, and career. Within academic, for example, students can work on basic skills, academic planning, study skills, research, problem-solving, communication skills, computer literacy, leadership, and knowledge in major field of study. Likewise, the text has subheadings, with web text or links, to personal/social and career issues and describes the persons and their location on campus who provide assistance in these areas. On a large campus where services are dispersed, having a well designed Web page for new students can be a very important student service.

Also when necessary, counselors must make direct referrals to the psychiatric service, health services or other support services when appropriate. They should cooperate with residential life and peer-counseling or peer-mentoring programs. The latter can be particularly effective with low achievers, particularly if those chosen to be peer mentors started college as developmental students and are now successful upperclassmen. Appointing students to these positions is also good way to recognize and reward former developmental students.

Personal and career development courses offered by counselors are particularly effective when offered during the second term of the freshman year (Rayman & Garis, 1989, p.138)

Helping Faculty Understand and Deal with Student Motivational and Behavioral Problems.

Counselors can serve another important role by helping faculty understand and deal with student motivational problems. For example, a developmental skills instructor writes "The hardest things for me to adjust to is students' passivity in class and resistance to homework. My students are for the most part wonderful, smart people. But they don't value knowledge intrinsically. They also seem to view reading as very boring (I guess it is when compared to video games and action movies)."(Linda Lane, Foothill Community College, personal communication).

Furthermore, faculty in other disciplines face the same problems and complain of "students who behave with passiveness and caginess and don't want to be engaged in learning; who are reluctant to pursue self-help strategies despite strong encouragement to do so. and don't take their instructor's advice." (Petit and White 1996).

Explaining that some students become abrasive, unruly, and disrupt the learning process if it threatens to reveal their deficiencies, Petit and White (1996) quote a professor as saying "They don't come to class or drop out or try to bribe the instructor. Guys want to become your closest friend and ally- young ladies think they can impress you with as much of their body as they can get away with." (Petit and White, 1996).

A statistics instructor writes, "With my community college students there is also a motivational problem: Increasingly, I cannot get students to do the homework, let alone a group project outside of class. They simply refuse, and seem willing to take the C rather than the A they could get if they really worked. Or they just do not believe that they will get only a C until it is too late. Many students act like they are still in high school. I think they get the message that reading is not important and that encourages them to do the minimum they can get away with." (Annette Gourgey, CUNY personal communication.)

Because students direct more behavior at the teacher, teaching becomes more stressful. "Students are quick to blame and intimidate faculty which creates an adversarial student teacher relationship. " (Petit and White, 1996). Faculty members in open-admissions institutions daily face the dilemma of maintaining academic standards and challenging very underprepared students to meet them . As one faculty members states,"They compare you with other teachers and give you poor

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evaluations" leading Petit and White to conclude that the mismatch between faculty and student expectations has left both parties unfulfilled. As a result of this clash in values, faculty tend to offer more depth and less breadth in their courses and add remedial content, inflate grades and straggle with the question of whether to pass students who don't know.

Since low achievers place a lot of stress on instructors and are more likely to blame their teachers for their failures and act out in class, faculty can profit from counselors' input and support on how to deal with classroom behavior problems. Counselors can also assist faculty in establishing clear policies on handling psychological crises including behavioral problems in the classroom, and communicating these policies to other, faculty instructional staff and students.

Mentoring

In my opinion, mentoring is the most important part of a comprehensive program for low achieving students and counselors play a vital role in selecting, training, and supporting mentors. Mentoring can be defined as a "one to one relationship between an older person and a younger person that is based on modelling behavior and extended dialogue between them." (Lester & Johnson, 1981. Although mentoring has both formal and informal aspects, it is the informal aspects that are the most powerful. Astin (1993) points out that interaction with faculty and staff is a crucial factor in getting students involved with college and Noel, Levitz and Saluri (1985) consider mentoring as an invaluable way of improving student retention.

Mentors play many roles - as an information source, or one who listens to problems, or as an academic advisor, social or activities advisor and problem solver. Studies have shown that mentoring is particularly helpful to students who have not decided on a major, minority students and freshmen women. (Women are now the majority of students attending college and are more willing to seek counseling help than men. Women of color who often face isolation, exclusion and attitudinal barriers in higher education may gain in self-affirmation and remain on campus longer if they are mentored. Studies have also shown that student who are mentored increase their confidence in seeking goals, making decisions, solving problems and, in general developing a more positive attitude toward the overall institutional environment. (Johnson, 1989, p. 122).

Fleming (1984) reported that mentoring was a critical factor in the success of Black students on both Black campuses and predominantly white campuses , that the importance of having "one caring person" to student

success applied to Black students too, and that the race of the mentor was not an issue. (Fleming as quoted in Johnson, 1989 p. p. 121).

Usually faculty members, counselors, and academic advisors are recommended as mentors, but upper-classman, graduate students, even other campus staff like the head of the campus police can serve in a mentoring capacity and be accepted by students. Certainly, the pool of mentors should reflect the diversity of the student body- in gender, racial and ethnic diversity .. and should be comprised of persons willing to undertake training and spend the time necessary with individual students: persons who have the ability and the desire to establish rapport with students and are sensitive to student differences. Experts in student mentoring emphasize that mentors should undergo comprehensive training programs with periodic retraining as essential components of the program. The training should be structured and include skill development, program philosophy and knowledge of the campus support services. (Johnson, 1989). Mentors also need training both in how to develop relationships as well as how to end them

"The key to mentoring is caring. Many freshmen need someone who cares and can help them through the academic maze and the confusing process of becoming mature and achieving academic success. Mentoring is one important and caring solution to enhancing freshman success." (Johnson, 1989, p. 128).

In successful programs for underprepared students students see a mentor one hour a week at a minimum, and counselors are responsible for organizing and supervising the mentoring program. Mentors should follow students very closely and contact them if they fail to keep appointments. If your program has a large number of students, you will need many mentors and a very well organized and highly structured mentoring system. Mentors can encourage reluctant students who won't otherwise volunteer for help, to use the various support services you offer and ensure that they follow through.

Remember you may have excellent skills courses, tutoring support and other services, but if you do not have a mentoring system to support individual students and insure they use the services they need, many of your students will fall through the cracks.

Who Are the Developmental Students?

If you were to visit a typical developmental skills class, you would be surprised at the diversity you would encounter for developmental students range widely in age, ethnic background, physical ability and in many other ways Some are adults returning to school after many years - insecure and with rusty skills. Others are high school dropouts, while some planned to enter technical fields after high school, but now want college. They may be certified as learning disabled or victims of poor schools that never challenged them or international students or refugees who acquired their previous schooling in a language other than English. Some are disadvantaged minorities from ghetto high schools; a few are graduates of expensive prep schools. Some were ignored by their teachers--those whom no one bothered to encourage to consider going to college. (Hardin 1991). Many are convinced that they can't learn certain subjects like writing or math. Some have handicaps in vision, or hearing or emotional problems which interfere with learning and others have more subtle handicap such as learning disabilities or attention deficit disorders that limited their ability to learn in the past but were not detected before college.

Another group of developmental learners have been called *The Users*--students who lack clear cut academic goals and use the educational system for their own purposes. (Hardin, 1988). Their main reason for being in college is to receive financial aid and other benefits and they aspire to get the minimum grades that will enable them to continue in school/. So they apply little effort to studying. Obviously they need more than academic assistance: they need counseling and other support services, but are unlikely to seek them out. Interestingly, if these system-abusers can become excited about the prospect of learning, they can become excellent students, but they are among the most difficult to teach. (Hardin, 1988).

Large Numbers of Developmental Increase the Need for Services

During the 1992-93 academic year, about 1.6 million students--13 percent of all undergraduates-reported taking at least one remedial (or developmental) course and more recent U. S, Office of Education studies show that 29 percent of 1996 entering freshmen took developmental courses.

Although many people associate college developmental education with minority students, most developmental students are White. (Boylan, Bonham & Bliss, 1993, American Council on Education, 1996). Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of the individuals who took these courses were white, however, students of color enrolled in developmental classes at higher rates comprising more than one-third (35 percent) of those who took

remedial courses in 1992-93, but less than one-quarter (23 percent) of those who did not. Data show that students in need of remediation were more likely to be from low-income families, were born outside of the United States, and speak a language other than English at home, Twenty-nine percent of today's freshmen take developmental courses and low socioeconomic status is a better predictor of who needs developmental courses than is race. (American Council on Education, 1996).

First Generation College Students

Developmental students often are the first generation of their family to attend college. Having left behind families and friends who did not attend college and do not understand its customs. they face even greater problems than their peers in adjusting to college. Most parents worry about how the college experience will change their child, but, they usually know and accept the value of a college education and are supportive. However, parents of first generation students have even stronger fears about what college will do to their sons and daughters. These new freshmen may not only lack support from their relatives but encounter family objections, contempt and ridicule. Single mothers hoping to prepare themselves for a better job may be bitterly attacked by their mothers for "abandoning their babies" for college; Latino women who want to attend college may be blocked from higher education by their fathers and husbands for going against their customs. and regardless of ethnic background, and any 18 year old woman maybe criticized by her relatives for not being married . The families and friends of young men from some groups who go to college see them as traitors to their family and friends. and urge them to grow up, quit school and get a real job.

Thus first-generation college students may be accused of leaving their culture, abandoning family values and becoming a threat or a stranger to their families and friends. Steven Brookfield (1990) calls this "culture suicide" - the situation where students lose their former support network as a result of the changes they undergo while attending college. Since they face conflicts between family values and college, counseling can aid them and may be necessary in resolving these difficulties. .

Common Skills Problems.

Despite their differences, each of these students has one thing in common- - they are weak in the basic reading, writing, and/or mathematics skills that are so essential to succeeding in college, and are weak in background knowledge of most school subjects as well. Since they have poor skills, they may not be able to read college text books nor write the required

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essays and papers nor understand how to work the mathematics problems. And because they did not develop these skills in the past, they also lack the concepts and information that their peers who have been reading and writing avidly for years have mastered.

How do developmental students different from regular students? Research suggests that the answer is that they differ in the intensity of their weaknesses in basic skills and often have debilitating attitudinal problems and because they have been made painfully aware of their weaknesses they may suffer from low esteem and other affective difficulties. Although they share many of the same difficulties that their better prepared peers have , they are behind and need to catch up and many need to develop motivation to improve.

Although most have been low achievers and had negative school experiences, which will make it very difficult to succeed in college they may not be ready for nor see the need for change and may insist on responding to college demands with the same unsuccessful techniques that exacerbated their failure in earlier years. In other words, they need to be reprogrammed for academic success.

Their responses to their difficulties differ too. Some are angry, aggressive, others as passive rote-learners, or acting out their frustrations or they may choose to reject help and if referred by an instructor somehow manage to lost between the instructor's office and the counseling service.

Most aren't intrinsically motivated toward school work, and some external motivators work, some don't. For example, grades mean little, but credit (by implication getting through college rapidly) is a more effective motivator.

For many developmental students, but not all, being successful in school has eluded them Thus they share many traits with college students who find themselves on academic probation-- help rejection, passivity, low motivation,

Dealing with the Effects of Failure

Students who are failing come in for counseling reluctantly, if at all, when sent by advisers, and if they come, they tend to be in a state of deep depression or denial. Therefore, poor achievers are not the college counselor's favorite clients, and the research on the efficacy of counseling in improving the academic achievement of failing students reveals a dismal picture. Barbara Kirk described the counselor's quandary in a book on

underachievement written in 1965 as follows: "Universally in these cases [students on academic probation], the counselor reports that it was a matter of extreme difficulty to obtain any direct discussion of the problem with the counselee, however obvious and apparent the problem, and however voluntarily the counselee had sought counseling. Moreover, the recurrent report is that it was extremely difficult to obtain a description or discussion of any of the counselee's feelings, or even, in many cases, situations or vicissitudes which might be expected to occasion strong counselee reactions." She adds that the clients show no surprise when they learn they have done extremely well on ability tests and that their excuses for their poor grades are "unrealistic, superficial, and largely implausible." The counselor must work very hard with these students, and the prognosis is poor.

If students on academic probation who voluntarily come in for counseling pose problems , what about the probationary students who don't follow through when help is recommended? Sharon Silverman and Anne M. Juhasz (1993) investigated this question that has baffled counselors for ages-- why students who are on academic probation reject help. Asking what factors contribute to the lack of responsiveness to offers of help to students on probation, they interviewed students who after being notified that they were placed on probation and offered help failed to respond after three contacts. They found that help rejectors demonstrated unresolved conflict in the area of trust versus mistrust and were skeptical about offers of help; had strong feelings of autonomy and felt capable of independent action

The help rejector was characterized by lack of friends, companions, and family support, having low self-confidence and a feels that they are unworthy and presented a profile predominated by the need for safety, love/belonging, and esteem. None of the students studied had shared their academic probation status with their family or close friends- in other words, their failure was the best kept secret of all and probably the most devastating for the them since it interfered with their social and personal relationships and limited their opportunity for satisfactory experiences with those who might be supportive.

This study suggests that successful programs have to meet the help-rejectors unmet needs of love and belonging and unresolved conflicts and these students need to be informed in a very personalized way not just b having the dean send them letters.

These characteristics of students who fail in college add impetus to the need for preventative counseling.

Returning adults who are enrolled in developmental courses usually are more highly motivated and more willing to follow professors' advice and instruction although they may be quite naive about effective study techniques and lack skills. On the darker side of the picture are the underprepared teenagers fresh out of high school whose teachers face a different set of problems - students who don't know that they don't know. and refuse to take responsibility for their own learning. Typically these are students who have graduated with good grades from academically weak high schools although many students who just barely passed express the same over confidence and engage in similar behavior patterns. - Some come from inner city high school; others from rural schools that send few students to college, some even come from undemanding private schools where they have not had to study. .

These students who are unaware of their deficiencies are the most difficult to teach . Some are confident that they will do well in college and that it will be the same as high school (i.e., no matter how little effort they put in to studying, they were passed.) They have unrealistic aspirations and rarely heed advice from faculty or anyone else-it's almost as if they have to fail before they are willing to listen.

As Sue Hashway, a developmental mathematics teacher at Grambling State University (LA) describes them "I teach at an open-admissions institution. I have many students who never had the appropriate high school background in math to prepare them for college. Some have never had Algebra while others completed their math requirements for graduation in the ninth grade and have a 3 or 4 year lapse in which they have taken no math. The poorer the student's attitude toward math, the greater the possibility of a long lapse. ... With these teen-aged students, college seems to be high school with more opportunities to socialize. Others have extremely unrealistic views of their strength and weaknesses. "

You may have to extend yourself further with high risk students until they learn the ropes and begin to understand the college culture?.

If these students are admitted to an open- admissions college without a strong , well-coordinated program, it intensifies the problems for faculty. As Petit and White (1996) point out: "When an institution treats large numbers of underprepared students as if they require no special resources, it places a heavy burden on faculty and puts them in an uncomfortable, compromising position. ..So many of these kids require.. what amounts to academic reconstructive surgery... Overcrowded classes

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leave (faculty) with no choice but to water down the content of their courses. "(Petit and White, 1996, pp. 9 & 10).

Misperceptions about College Success.
Many are convinced that they can not learn in school. School success is just not part of their universe. So one of our hardest jobs is convincing our students that they can learn if they only put in the effort. Weak students often believe that school work comes easily to bright, successful students who never have to study. There's a trick to it, they think, and if they could only master it, they'd be brilliant - so they fall for advertisements about speed reading - (I've known students who tried to speed read their calculus texts) and if that doesn't work will try other equally inane quick tricks that are bound to fail.

The excuses students give for their poor performance also give us clues about their problems. For example, some students have an external locus of control (i.e., students who do poorly blame the test, or the teacher or say they can't do this because they aren't bright enough-- compared with successful students who blame themselves if they don't do well and say things like "I should have worked harder." (Rotter, 1966).

Today we are more concerned with what Bandura (1982) calls "self-efficacy" - the degree to which a student is confident that s/he can learn.

Recent studies shed light on this phenomenon. In the 60s and 70s, college administrators assumed that if their colleges admitted high risk students, they should be given the best teachers in order to help them succeed. Research shows that is not so - even with outstanding instructors, high risk students still failed. What made the difference was whether the student felt that he or she was capable of learning the subject - not how skilled the lecturer was. In one study, high risk students in a psychology class were given "attributional retraining" - that is, an experimental attempt to change their "locus of control"- to convince them that they could learn the subject. Attributional retraining works like this. First the class is shown a film in which the professor describes a situation when he faced failing in college and wanted to give up but a friend talked him out of quitting and encouraged him to keep trying. He succeeded and went on to graduate, etc. Next, students were given items from an intelligence test and instruction on how to work the problems - and shown that, with practice, they could succeed. They were given feedback on each item so that they quickly learned how to do it. As a results of the attributional retraining, the researchers found that high risk students scored better on quizzes after lectures (so they probably listened more) and did more homework in the course, and made higher grades than they had previously.

What does this suggest about how to motivate high-risk students. Note, there are two principles here - first, describing a situation in which you had difficulty in learning and how you solved it. e.g., my taking an economics exam after being out of college for four years and spending the whole hour on one question.

Second, breaking each task down into small parts and making sure that students learn bit by bit and giving them feedback as to whether they're right or wrong also helps change their attitudes from doubt to assurance.. In other words, give them frequent feedback. The principle is that students NEED TO KNOW THAT LEARNING TAKES TIME AND WORK BUT THAT WITH EFFORT YOU CAN GET THERE. But telling them this doesn't work. YOU HAVE TO SHOW THEM!

Some know they don't know (they're willing to try to learn); others don't know that they don't know -- they have to be helped to discover what to learn and why; other think they know and don't (An example of the latter is the tragedy of US students' math scores in international comparisons. Although U. S. students score lower than students in any other developed nation and even lower than some underdeveloped ones, studies show that US students think they're good at math.) !

CONTROL THEORY

One of the universal problems of the college freshman - e.g., that we emphasize with freshmen is time management- a major problem for college freshmen everywhere. Recent research on the effective use of time has turned up some interesting results. First, time management is a more complex task than we used to think and is probably comprised of several factors - the most important of which is whether students feel they're in control of their own time, not just whether they keep schedules, set priorities, and do the right things. e.g., women score higher on time management scales, -- i.e. they know the right things to do, but the are lower on the crucial factor of feeling that they're in control of their own time. --It's as if women instinctively expect to be interrupted, or are waiting to be interrupted.

Another study that looked at freshmen time management attitudes and compared these with cumulative GPAs at the end of the senior year, found that students who were good long range planners don't do as well in completing college as those who were good at short-range planning. This is sort of counter-intuitive result since colleges are always pushing freshmen to decide on their majors , think about what they want to do . etc. What it seems to mean is that students who have rigid long range goals

and the steps they must take to meet them firmly in mind, may have trouble making the day to day adjustments that college often requires and the student who is a short-range planner is more flexible and can adjust to the many frustrations involved- professors. who change their mind about tests, schedules, etc.

Studies of developmental students consistently show that programs where teachers are concerned with students' attitudes and emotions about their school work are more successful than those where the teacher concentrates only on teaching the subject. So developmental students may be different than the college students who can survive despite large lectures, indifferent instructors and impersonal settings. (But many of the strategies that work well with developmental students work equally well with average or high achieving students. For examples, courses where they get instant feedback. But the reverse is not true. Developmental students, at least initially, don't do well in the traditional lecture/discussion courses that better prepared students can pass.

Some of the recent research results support our traditional study skills teaching strategies, others seems counter-intuitive to ideas we have long accepted. For example, the finding that students who are good at short-range planning are more successful than those who prefer long range planning suggests that we'd better examine our assumptions and perhaps conduct more research to examine this question so that we can plan more effective intervention strategies. Affective factors such as locus of control, self-esteem, and self-efficacy appear to be vital factors in how well students learn. Even in something as apparently simple as time management, the key seems to be whether the student feels able to control her own time, not her activities nor the logs nor the schedules she keeps nor the priorities she sets. Certainly these studies can give us clues about how to work with the students who manage to fail despite our best efforts. Whether we are teaching courses or counseling students on skills, it is clear that it's not what we teach, but the way that we teach it and even more the way students feel about their ability to learn it that determines whether and how much they will learn.

Test Anxiety

Students seem to have few qualms about discussing their test anxiety. If a program to alleviate test anxiety is advertised, students will volunteer, and they frequently come in to discuss their test fears with instructors, counselors, skills specialists, friends, or anyone who will listen. Instructors can identify exam-panic victims easily, even in large classes, for they turn in blank bluebooks on exams.

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Psychologists now generally support the idea that there are at least two kinds of anxiety- facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety based on the hypothesis that anxiety is debilitating only to students who have learned a habitual class of interfering responses. Without these interfering responses, the authors believe, test anxiety leads to task-relevant responses and good performance. For example, some students agree with the test item "Anxiety helps me do a better job on an exam . "

Exam anxiety can camouflage other problems, and academically weak students are just as susceptible to it as those with strong skills. In diagnosis, it is important to determine whether the student's anxiety is due to lack of study skills or basic reading inabilities or is a learned way of responding to evaluative situations or a condition precipitated by poor instruction. In my experience, the most pernicious cases of exam panic occur in students whose anxiety masks a deficiency in reading for inference, a deficiency in logical thinking, or a refusal to read material carefully. Controlled, intensive practice on the skills these students have avoided is necessary, for neither deep relaxation, desensitization, intensive therapy, nor tranquilizers will result in improved performance, though these treatments may reduce the anxiety felt about tests.

Ideally, testing should be a positive learning experience, one in which students recognize their goals, are assured of their knowledge, and feel competent. However, students rarely feel satisfied after taking final examinations or standardized tests. In fact, exams are dreaded and feared- or, at best, tolerated as an inevitable part of a college education.

Many of us as students, however, have had the experience of suffering a bout of amnesia in the middle of an examination. This is a most frustrating experience indeed, especially when an hour or two after we turn in our bluebooks, the ideas we were struggling so hard to recall pop back into our heads.

Always endemic among college students, exam panic currently seems to be reaching epidemic proportions, judging from the number of programs offered by counseling and learning centers. It is therefore essential that anyone who works with college students be aware of its dynamics.

First, it is important to realize that many students are genuinely afraid of failing, --in fact they are paralyzed by anticipated failure. Not just underprepared college students who have failed in the past, but also those who have excelled in school fear failure. Of course, our school system encourages this fear from the first grade on by reinforcing the idea that to

be a worthwhile person, one must succeed in school. Unconsciously or consciously accepting society's values, thus equating one's worth with being bright and getting A's, sets the stage for continued frustrations as one ascends the educational ladder.

If students feel that grades reflect their self-worth and attach great significance to them-that is, equate failure with letting down family, friends, former teachers, or other significant persons-they will be susceptible to exam panic. Individuals handle this tendency in different ways. Some become super-strivers and fiercely compete, others suffer deepest despair, and some avoid situations in which they will be tested. Sometimes fear of failure is genuine, as in a student who has not prepared for the exam; sometimes it represents an overreaction, or what might be termed a neurotic anxiety. Students with this type of apprehensiveness will undoubtedly be anxious about reading, homework, exams-anything that they feel represents a threat.

Treating severe cases of text anxiety can be very difficult and take a very long time.

Study Avoidance

Some college students refuse to put their full efforts into studying. Not studying gives them an excuse if they fail; if they had invested time and effort in studying, then failing would confirm that they were not really very bright. They protect themselves from this exigency by procrastinating, studying too little and too late, developing myriad excuses for failing, or-if, despite all, they do pass-dismissing responsibility for their grade by saying that the test was easy.

The test anxious student

Research findings on test anxiety suggests that highly anxious test takers divide their attention between themselves (their own internal cues) and the task; they spend time doing things that are not related to the test. For example, they worry about how well they are doing, reread the same questions, ruminate over choices, notice where others are on the test, and observe that their peers are finishing faster. These superfluous activities guarantee poor performance on tests that require one's full attention.

Studies also suggest that test anxiety can be either facilitating or debilitating. It is facilitating when it results in students' paying close attention to the test, but debilitating when students have learned responses that interfere with the task.

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Treatment Methods. If your diagnostic attempts have eliminated inadequate study skills and poor reading as possible causes of exam panic, and you find that the student can perform adequately in the subject as long as tests are not involved, you may wish to consider using relaxation therapies.

In addition to providing a strong study skills and test-taking skills program, you can work with professors in improving examinations, and encourage them to experiment with anxiety-reducing ways of administering tests. For example, administering exams on the computer where the student responds by indicating the letter of his/her answer on the keyboard and also his/her degree of certainty. If the student misses the item, s/he receives additional information about the concept on a projector, and gets a chance to try another question on the same material. This enables students to take the test whenever they feel ready and saves the professor valuable class time that would otherwise be spent giving the exam. Besides, the students receive their test results immediately after the test.

Another stress reducing technique is to train peer counselors to administer test-anxiety scales and help students use self-administered relaxation tapes

Reversing the Expectation of Failing.

On the other side of the exam panic coin is the student who expects to fail and apparently is unwilling to do anything to change that expectation. For a long time educators believed that if marginal, at-risk students were exposed to the best teaching a college has to offer, they would do well. But experiments on control theory shows that this does not happen, for unless students feel that they have some control and can influence their environment, their capacity to learn from good instruction is limited. Students feel they lack control if they believe they cannot learn the subject or if there are unannounced, tests, poorly organized lectures, unclear assignments, and other situations that they find difficult. However, research suggests that giving students with low perceived control feedback on individual aptitude items before a lecture temporarily altered their perceptions of control and improved their performance (Whimbey and Whimbey, 1977, Perry and Penner, 1990).

Perry and Penner studied the effects of attributional retraining, a therapeutic method for reinstating psychological control, which involved showing the class an 8-minute videotape of the professor recounting an instance when he was in college and despite repeated failure persisted because a friend urged him to and went on to complete his studies through graduate school. He encouraged students to attribute poor performance to

lack of effort and good performance to ability and proper effort. Also the students were given a chance to improve aptitude scores with feedback. As a result of these brief interventions, students with external locus of control (i.e., those who place the blame for their failures on outside factors such as bad teaching or a poor exam) improved their performance on the test following a lecture, a test a week later, and on their homework performance.

These studies give us clues about how to work with students who manage to fail despite our best efforts. Whether we are teaching courses or counseling students on skills, it is clear that it's not what we teach, but the way that we teach it and the way students feel about their ability to learn it that makes the difference in whether they learn.

Descriptions of Successful Programs

Most at-risk students have been previously identified by college entrance or placement tests and/or previous grades in high school, but many in open-admissions colleges have not. Some programs try to identify at-risk students as early as 9th grade ; others wait until they walk in the college door. Whatever the case, new, at-risk students need a through orientation program at entrance and mentoring and/or an orientation course as well as counseling, advising and skills courses during their first term. It is also important that students be given credit and permitted to take one carefully selected regular academic course.

Although we've long known how to run successful programs for underprepared students --indeed, some Black Colleges have been doing it well for generations. It takes careful selection, counseling services that students will accept, intensive mentoring, as well as academic skills and content in a highly structured program

Donovan (1976) described his successful program in "Alternatives to the Revolving Door" as an intensive care unit where students are not given choices. but are provided with an atmosphere best described as "tough love."

Roueche and Snow (1977) encouraged developmental educators to use an interdisciplinary program curriculum managed by a team of instructors , counselors, and administrations. In this system, the students can progress step-by-step through a well planned program: in which each member of the team contributes unique skills, creating a learning environment for professionals as well as students. and that without exception the one variable that separated the successful developmental program from those

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with moderate success. (those with 80-90% persistence and high levels of achievement) was that instructors spent as much time on self-concept development as on teaching basic skills. The excellent developmental educator "understands that the content she is going to develop only makes sense if the students value themselves."

A recent example is the pre-professional program at Xavier College, a small college in New Orleans that has led the nation in placing Afro-Americans into medical school since 1993. Virtually all of their students who are admitted to medical schools go on to become doctors. Xavier also graduates a higher proportion of its students What's their "secret? They provide a supportive and nurturing environment to first-generation college students who are likely to be unaware of the support facilities and opportunities that their college offers. Finding that many entering students were unprepared for their rigorous science and math courses , Xavier set about two decades ago to change that by offering summer workshops for high school students, new strategies for teaching mathematics and science, small classes, custom-designed textbooks that contain daily homework assignments, sample problems, reviews of fundamental mathematical concepts and vocabulary. For example, "If doing a science problem requires advanced algebra, the workbook offers them a quick math review." (Fletcher, 1997. p. A-13).

Also Xavier enrolls students in small classes that are taught by senior professors who give tests frequently. They participate in an extensive tutoring program, and are given writing classes linked with science courses Students meet with an advisor once a week and are closely monitored on their attendance and course work. They also receive personal , intensive and continuous advisement and counseling about what it takes to get into and succeed in graduate and professional schools and they are tutored on test-taking skills . As one student said, "I was very impressionable in high school .. but, from the day I got to Xavier, I was directed. I constantly had someone looking over my shoulder and that helped. To me the entire benefit was the structure of the programs." (Fletcher, 1997 p A-13). Most of the pressure and structure is characteristic of the first two years, after that courses resemble science courses in other universities.

The underlying factor in Xavier's success may be the commitment and mind-set of the faculty and their belief that their students can succeed. Call it a "desk-side manner" if you will, but it is a rare exception in higher education today where the prevailing philosophy is to bring them in and let them sink or swim - it's the student's decision!

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SUMMARY

Successful programs for high risk students are labor-intensive, time consuming, and require committed staff who can provide a safe, nurturing yet highly structured environment for students to overcome their previous negative experiences with school. Counseling services must be closely integrated into the total program and be proactive, providing preventative services for students, staff and faculty. Counselors should offer a variety of formal and informal individual and group programs for both students and staff including, but not limited to : offering credit courses in personal/social, academic and career planning, informal groups to meet students' special needs, and setting up and supervising mentoring programs.

Developmental students, if left to their own devices rarely use the services provided for them - nor will they search out sources of help - Rather they need counselors and mentors to encourage them to use services and see to it that they use what they need. Successful programs must be coordinated with counseling and be comprehensive, highly structured, and conveniently located so they are accessible to students.

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